



THE
CONNOISSEUR.

By Mr. T O W N,

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— — — *Facies non omnibus una,*
Nec diversa tamen. — — — OVID.

To Mr. T O W N.

S I R,



T is whimsical to observe the mistakes that we country gentlemen are led into at our first coming to town. We are induced to think, and indeed truly, that your fine ladies are composed of different materials from our rural ones; since, though they sleep all day and rake all night, they still remain as fresh and ruddy as a parson's daughter or a farmer's wife. At other times we are apt to wonder, that such delicate creatures as they appear should yet be so much proof against cold, as to look as rosy in *January* as in *June*, and even in the sharpest weather

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to be very unwilling to approach the fire. I was at a loss to account for this unalterable hue of their complexions: but I soon found that beauty was not more peculiar to the air of St. James's than of York; and that this perpetual bloom was not native, but imported from abroad. Not content with that red and white which nature gave, your belles are reduced (as they pretend) to the necessity of supplying the flush of health with the *rouge* of vermilion, and giving us *Spanish* wool for *English* beauty.

THE very reason alledged for this fashionable practice is such, as (if they seriously considered it) the ladies would be ashamed to mention. "The late hours they are *obliged* to keep, render them such *perfect frights*, that they would be as loth to appear abroad without paint as without cloaths." This, it must be acknowledged, is too true: But would they suffer their fathers or their husbands to wheel them down for one month to the old mansion-house, they would soon be sensible of the change, and soon perceive how much the early walk exceeds the late assembly. The vigils of the card-table have spoiled many a good face; and I have known a beauty stick to the midnight rubbers, till she has grown as homely as the Queen of Spades. There is nothing more certain in all *Hoyle's* cases, than that Whist and late hours will ruin the finest set of features: but if the ladies would give up their routes for the healthy amusements of the country, I will venture to say their carmine would be then as useless as their artificial nosegays.

A MORALIST might talk to them of the heinousness of this practice; since all deceit is criminal, and painting is no better than looking a lye. And should they urge that nobody is deceived by it, he might add, that the plea for admitting it is then at an end; since few are yet arrived at
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that height of *French* politeness, as to dress their cheeks in public, and to profess wearing vermilion as openly as powder. But I shall content myself with using an argument more likely to prevail: and such I trust will be the assurance, that this practice is highly disagreeable to the men. What must be the mortification, and what the disgust of the lover, who goes to bed to a bride as blooming as an angel, and finds her in the morning as wan and yellow as a corpse? For marriage soon takes off the mask; and all the resources of art, all the mysteries of the toilet are then at an end. He that is thus wedded to a cloud instead of a *Juno*, may well be allowed to complain, but without relief: for this is a custom, which once admitted so tarnishes the skin, that it is next to impossible ever to retrieve it. Let me therefore caution those young beginners, who are not yet discoloured past redemption, to leave it off in time, and endeavour to procure and preserve by early hours that unaffected bloom, which art cannot give, and which only age or sickness can take away.

OUR beauties were formerly above making use of so poor an artifice: They trusted to the lively colouring of nature, which was heightened by temperance and exercise; but our modern belles are obliged to retouch their cheeks every day, to keep them in repair. We were then as superior to the *French* in the assembly as in the field: but since a trip to *France* has been thought a requisite in the education of our ladies as well as gentlemen, our polite females have thought fit to dress their faces as well as their heads *a la mode de Paris*. I am told, that when an *English* lady is at *Paris*, she is so surrounded with false faces, that she is herself obliged (if she would not appear singular) to put on the

the mask. But who would exchange the brilliancy of the diamond for the faint lustre of *French* paste? And for my part I would as soon expect, that an *English* beauty at *Morocco* would japan her face with lamb-black, in complaisance to the fable beauties of that country. Let the *French* ladies white-wash and plaister their fronts, and lay on their colours with a trowel : but these dawblings of art are no more to be compared to the genuine glow of a *British* cheek, than the coarse streaks of the painter's brush can resemble the native veins of the marble. This contrast is placed in a proper light in Mr. *Addison*'s fine epigram on Lady *Manchester* ; which will serve to convince us of the force of undissembled beauty.

*When haughty Gallia's dames, that spread
O'er their pale cheeks a lifeless red,
Beheld this beauteous stranger there,
In native charms divinely fair,
Confusion in their looks they show'd,
And with unborrow'd blushes glow'd.*

I think, Mr. TOWN, you might easily prevail on your fair readers to leave off this unnatural practice, if you could once thoroughly convince them, that it impairs their beauty instead of improving it. A lady's face, like the coats in the *Tale of a Tub*, if left to itself, will wear well ; but if you offer to load it with foreign ornaments, you destroy the original ground.

AMONG other matter of wonder on my first coming to town, I was much surpris'd at the general appearance of youth among the ladies. At present there is no distinction in their complexions between a beauty in her teens and a lady in her grand climacteric : yet at the same time I could

could not but take notice of the wonderful variety in the face of the same lady. I have known an olive beauty on a Monday grow very ruddy and blooming on Tuesday; turn pale on Wednesday; come round to the olive hue again on Thursday; and in a word, change her complexion as often as her gown. I was amazed to find no old aunts in this town, except a few unfashionable people, whom no body knows; the rest still continuing in the zenith of their youth and health, and falling off, like timely fruit, without any previous decay. All this was a mystery that I could not unriddle, 'till on being introduced to some ladies, I unluckily improved the hue of my lips at the expence of a fair one, who unthinkingly had turned her cheek; and found that my kisses were given, (as is observed in the epigram) like those of *Pyramus*, through a wall. I then found, that this surprizing youth and beauty was all counterfeited; and that (as *Hamlet* says) "God had given them one face, " and they had made themselves another."

I HAVE mentioned the accident of my carrying off half a lady's face by a salute, that your courtly dames may learn to put on their faces a little tighter; but as for my own daughters, while such fashions prevail, they shall still remain in *Yorkshire*. There, I think, they are pretty safe; for this unnatural fashion will hardly make its way into the country, as this vamped complexion would not stand against the rays of the sun, and would inevitably melt away in a country dance. The ladies have, indeed, been always the greatest enemies to their own beauty, and seem to have a design against their own faces. At one time the whole countenance was eclipsed in a black velvet mask; at another it was blotted with patches; and at present it is crufted over with plaister of *Paris*. In those battered belles, who still

aim at conquest, this practice is in some sort excusable; but it is surely as ridiculous in a young lady to give up beauty for paint, as it would be to draw a good set of teeth merely to fill their places with a row of ivory.

INDEED, so common is this fashion among the young as well as the old, that when I am in a groupe of beauties, I consider them as so many pretty pictures; looking about me with as little emotion, as I do at *Hudson's*: And if any thing fills me with admiration, it is the judicious arrangement of the tints, and the delicate touches of the painter. Art very often seems almost to vie with nature: but my attention is too frequently diverted by considering the texture and hue of the skin beneath; and the picture fails to charm, while my thoughts are engrossed by the wood and canvass.

I am, Sir, your humble Servant,

RUSTICUS.

*** *We hope the letter directed (as desired) for A. B. is received, and should be glad to hear from him.*